

Community Impact Case Study FY21

Teach For Thailand: Partnering with community to develop vision and drive recruitment in Chiang Mai

In Chiang Mai, Teach For Thailand's investment in developing a collective, contextualized vision for the region has enabled the organization to partner more deeply with communities on various aspects of their program. Most recently, diverse stakeholders - including students, parents, school administrators, and local government officials - co-designed and co-led the process of selecting the new cohort of fellows who will teach in the region. This led to increased trust and collaboration across the various groups involved, and Teach For Thailand believes it will position the incoming fellows to have a greater impact in the communities where they will work for the next two years.



The Basics

In Thailand, 43% of students are not proficient in reading and science, and more than half of all students are not proficient in math. Teach For Thailand's first cohort was placed in 2014; since then, the organization has placed 7 cohorts in 13 provinces with the hope of growing academic opportunities for students, keeping them in school, and opening multiple paths of success for them.

Maewin Samakkee School and Samoeng Pittayakhom School are two of Teach For Thailand's placement schools in Chiang Mai province, about an hour-long flight and another hour's drive from Bangkok. Students at Maewin and Samoeng come from nearly two dozen different minority ethnic tribes; many do not speak fluent Thai, which perpetuates a stigma against these communities. For many students, the focus is on preparing for work in hospitality, a major industry in Chiang Mai and throughout the country. Over the past few years, Teach For Thailand has been

exploring ways to deepen their impact in these communities and mobilize actions around creating meaningful change for students.

The Approach

In 2020, Teach For Thailand undertook a collective, contextualized visioning process in order to align diverse stakeholders around what community progress would look like in Chiang Mai province. In 2021, the organization built on these foundations by implementing a pilot project to recruit and select Fellows in close partnership with the students, schools, families, and communities where the Fellows would be placed.

Teach For Thailand began by identifying and building investment across different stakeholders who would join the selection committee, including students, teachers, parents, and local government officials. From there, the 10-person committee jointly aligned on the ideal candidate profile, deepened their understanding of the selection process, and assessed the 40 applications from candidates. The committee ultimately made offers to 6 new Fellows, who began their placements in the community in August 2021. The pilot received strong positive feedback from the committee members; one community representative noted, “We felt proud to be part of the selection process, because someone was not only listening to our needs and voice, but actually taking action on those things in partnership with us.”

The Choices

Teach For Thailand’s approach ultimately seeks to build more authentic partnerships with the communities where their Fellows are placed. With respect to this pilot, some of the choices that reflect this orientation include:

- 1 Representative recruitment** - Explicitly linking the selection process as one method for working towards the collective, contextualized vision that the province has previously articulated
- 2 Co-creation with community** - Involving the selection committee in decisions around both process and criteria, in addition to input on specific Fellows
- 3 Building Fellows’ orientation to community partnerships** from the very beginning of the selection process, thereby setting a clear expectation for the importance of these relationships

The Impact

Teach For Thailand is excited to learn from this initial pilot, and is currently running learning loops to better understand the strengths, areas of opportunity, and progress as a result of this project. As part of this, the organization will track the Fellows selected through the pilot from Pre-Service Institute and beyond in order to determine how the unique profiles of these Fellows influence their performance in the classroom, as well as the strengths and attributes they bring to the broader 8th cohort of Teach For Thailand Fellows.